

Committee on Resources

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Statement of William Rinne
Deputy Commissioner
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Department of the Interior
House Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Water and Power
June 24, 2003

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to provide the Administration's views on H.R. 2040.

H.R. 2040 would amend the Irrigation Project Contract Extension Act of 1998 to require the Secretary of the Interior to extend each of the water service or repayment contracts for the Glendo Unit of the Missouri River Basin Project for a period of 2 years until December 31, 2005, or for the term of the cooperative agreement entered into by the states of Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado and the Secretary of the Interior.

Mr. Chairman, the Department supports the H.R. 2040 language as written.

On July 1, 1997, the States of Wyoming, Nebraska, and Colorado entered into a cooperative agreement for Platte River research and other efforts relating to endangered species habitats along the Central Platte River in Nebraska with the United States Department of the Interior. The purpose of the cooperative agreement is to jointly undertake a basin-wide effort to improve the habitat of four threatened and endangered species that use the Platte River. Successful completion of the cooperative study will lead to development of a basin-wide program that will serve as the reasonable and prudent alternative to offset the effects of existing and new water related activities in the Platte River Basin.

Glendo Dam and Reservoir is one of several Bureau of Reclamation dams and reservoirs on the North Platte River that operate as an integrated system. The Bureau of Reclamation has been proceeding with a process to consult under the Endangered Species Act on the entire reservoir system operations.

To successfully renew long-term contracts for Glendo Reservoir water will require the completion of Endangered Species Act consultation on the Bureau of Reclamation's North Platte River system operations. Such consultation will not be completed until after the final programmatic environmental impact statement and study have been completed. The final programmatic environmental impact statement is scheduled to be completed by November 2004, with the record of decision to follow in December 2004. H.R. 2040 will allow Reclamation to proceed with completing the renewal of the Glendo contracts following the record of decision.

Mr. Chairman, in summary, the Department supports the legislation for extension of the Glendo contracts provided by H.R. 2040. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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